

# Columbia receives \$1.3M in springs grant funding

September 26, 2020



Good news that more fragile aquifer-replenishing land has been removed from dangerous development or pumping, especially in the vulnerable Devil's Ear Spring Priority Focus Area. Now we need Seven Springs's destructive permit denied and the water plant run by Nestle shut down for good.

We also need for the district to work toward limiting new pumping permits and fertilizer applications until our rivers get back on their feet. This is hitting the sources of our ills.

The following article is from the Lake City Reporter, Sept. 26, 2020.

*Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.*

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*– A river is like a life: once taken,  
it cannot be brought back © Jim Tatum*

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grant funding**

## Local projects are state land acquisitions.

Staff reports

More than \$1.3 million will be spent by the state on three Columbia County springs restoration projects.

Among the projects selected by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's springs restoration appropriation funding were land acquisitions at Santa Fe Springs, Ichetucknee grasslands and Sawdust Spring at Devil's Ear Spring. Total, the three projects received \$1,346,595 of state funding from the Suwannee River Water Management District's \$3.7 million in state springs grant funding.

"With over 440 springs in our region, it is critical to focus our efforts on improving water quality through land acquisition and water quality improvements," Hugh Thomas, the executive director of the Suwannee River Water Management District, said in a release. "We appreciate the continued support Governor (Ron) DeSantis and FDEP have provided us in protecting and preserving our water resources for the community."

The Santa Fe Springs project consists of the acquisition of 254 acres at

the confluence of Olustee Creek and the Santa Fe River, which contains two springs — one large second magnitude spring as well as



Thomas

the acquisition.

Following the purchase, the Alachua Conservation Trust will take over management responsibility of the land and implementing a management plan. According to DEP, the property will be maintained as a public preserve.

The state is also purchasing 514 acres of property that is mostly mature sandhill grassland, including 124 native species. The property also has some mixed hardwood hammock as well as hay pasture land. The state is contributing \$95,200 into the purchase.

After undergoing prescribed fire and eliminating some of the hardwood trees, future plans for the property may include planting longleaf pines and use as a donor site of seed for grassland restoration projects, according to DEP.

The final Columbia County project is the acquisition of Sawdust Spring

— part of the Deveil's Ear Spring Priority Focus Area. The 163-acre property includes the third magnitude Sawdust Spring as well as nearly one mile of shoreline along the Santa Fe River.

The Alachua Conservation Trust will manage the property — which received \$634,395 in state springs grant funding — for water quality and will maintain it as a public preserve.

Other area projects receiving funding include a multi-year acquisition of 2,742 acres in Gilchrist County within the Devil's Ear Spring Priority Focus Area. That project received \$1 million in the grant funding and has received more than \$6 million in local funding match.

In Hamilton County, the City of Jasper received more than \$1.3 million for wastewater collection and treatment. The project would relocate discharge from the city's wastewater treatment plant south of town from discharging into Baisden Swamp into a rapid infiltration basin. Doing so will eliminate nutrients and other pollutants from the state's waters.

Total, the state appropriated \$50 million in grant funding for springs restoration on 22 projects.